

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 1865

FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BROWN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCGIFFERT, AMBASSADOR STOESSEL,
AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI, GENERAL BROWN AND GENERAL HAIG FROM
AMBASSADOR STRAUZ-HUPE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS MPOL NATO PO
SUBJ: TANKS FOR THE PORTUGUESE NATO BRIGADE

REF: (A) STATE 070117 (DTG 300103Z MAR 77), (B) LISBON 1268
(DTG 151116Z FEB 77), (C) USNATO 0958 (DTG 230930Z FEB
77), (D) USNATO 0636 (DTG 041820Z FEB 77), (E) LISBON
1845 (DTG 081747Z MAR 77) ALL NOTAL

1. PORTUGAL'S FUTURE ALIGNMENT WITHIN NATO AND WITH THE
US MAY HINGE IN LARGE MEASURE ON THE ALLIES' MEETING IN
TIMELY FASHION THE MODEST MODERNIZATION NEEDS OF THE
PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES. THIS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM HAS
IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR PORTUGAL'S INTERNAL STABILITY, AS
CONFIDENTIAL

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WELL AS FOR PORTUGAL'S RELATIONS TO NATO, AND FOR THESE
REASONS THE CREATION AND EQUIPPING OF A NATO-DEDICATED ARMY
BRIGADE HAS BEEN GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY BY BOTH PORTUGAL AND THE
US, AND MUCH ATTENTION IN NATO.

2. ONE OF THE MOST PERSISTENT PROBLEMS WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED
IN EQUIPPING THE ARMY BRIGADE IS THAT RELATED TO THE TIMELY
REPEAT TIMELY PROVISION OF A SMALL NUMBER OF REASONABLE MODERN
TANKS. IN JUNE, 1976 THE US LOANED THE PORTUGUESE FIVE M48A5
TANKS. THE FRG HAS RECENTLY STATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO

PROVIDE M48A2 TANKS IN SUFFICIENT NUMBER TO COMPLETE PORTUGAL'S NEED. THE FRG HAS ALSO EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE TO PAY FOR UPGRADING THESE OLD TANKS TO M48A5, SINCE SENIOR PORTUGUESE LEADERS UP TO AND INCLUDING PRESIDENT EANES HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE OFFER OF OBVIOUS "HAND-ME-DOWNS" WOULD HAVE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY WE ARE WORKING TO AVOID.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, I HAVE JUST RECEIVED REF A, WHICH APPEARS, AT LEAST ON THE SURFACE, TO BE A RESPONSE TO MY EARLIER SUGGESTION (REF C) THAT THE US DIVERT M48A5 TANKS FROM THE EXISTING UPGRADE LINE AT ANNISTON ARMY DEPOT IN ORDER TO MEET SOON THE PORTUGUESE EQUIPMENT NEEDS. THIS IS BASED, OF COURSE, ON THE FRG PAYING FOR UPGRADING.

4. IF ANNISTON IS UPGRADING ON THE ORDER OF 100 TANKS A MONTH, AND IF THE FRG PROVIDES 17 OR 18 OLD M48A2S TO RE-ESTABLISH THE US AUTHORIZED ACQUISITION OBJECTIVE (AAO), I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY LEGITIMATE PORTUGUESE EXPECTATIONS CANNOT BE MET AT ANY TIME WE CHOOSE TO MEET THEM, RATHER THAN BEGINNING REPEAT BEGINNING ALMOST TWO YEARS AFTER A FINAL DECISION IS MADE.

5. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE TIME DELAY TO THE ARMY OF DIVERTING TO PORTUGAL SOME UPGRADED TANKS IS NEGLIGIBLE, ON THE ORDER OF A WEEK OR TWO AT MOST. IN TERMS OF OUR CRITICAL CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICAL GOALS FOR PORTUGAL, A DELAY OF ALMOST TWO YEARS WOULD BE ABSURD.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: YOUR PERSONAL INTERVENTION IN THIS MATTER. STRAUSSZ-HUPE

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